Pray for the Rising Generation,

OR A

SERMON

Wherein Godly Parents are Encouraged, to Pray and Believe for their Children,

Preached the third Day of the fifth Month, 1678. which Day was set apart by the second Church in *BOSTON* in *NEW-ENGLAND*, humbly to seek unto God by Fasting and Prayer, for a Spirit of Converting Grace, to be poured out upon the Children and *Rising Generation* in *New-England*.

By *INCREASE MATHER*, Teacher of that Church.

Deut. 30. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed.*

2 Sam. 7. 27. *Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this Prayer unto thee.*

Isai. 32. 15. *Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful Land.*

Fieri non potest ut filius istarum lachrymarum pereat. *Augustin. Confess.* Lib. 3. Chap. 12.

Cambridge: Printed by *Samuel Green*, and sold by *Edmund Ranger* in *Boston*. 1678.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

To the Reader,

EMinent Blessings do not use to be poured down upon the World, except the Church of God be first stirred up to pray for them. The Lord who is styled שמע תפלה the Hearer of Prayer, delights to give mercy in this way. And it was never known since the World began, that the Spirit of Prayer was awakened in the hearts of those that can cry Abba Father but some great and blessed effect, did in due time follow. He said not to the seed of Jacob seek ye me in vain. O that God would bow the heart of New-England, even of all his Saints in these Churches, as one man, to cry mightily to Heaven, that his Spirit may be poured on the now rising (a multitude of sinful men that are risen up in their Fathers stead) and upon the after rising Generation. The Lords People have need of something to comfort them, in this day, when there are so many doleful symptoms of approaching wrath and ruine. Now if God say unto his praying ones amongst us, seek ye my face for the rising Generation, and their hearts answer again, Lord thy face we will seek for them, that will be no small encouragement unto Faith, that the blessed design of our Fathers (now with Christ beholding his glory) who transported themselves into this vast, and then wast Wilderness, in special with respect unto Posterity, that so they might leave a seed that shall serve him, and be accounted to the Lord for a generation, will not be wholly frustrate When did any People by Fasting and Prayer, ask the Holy Spirit of the Father, for themselves and theirs, and yet received no answer? shall we be the first that God ever denied?

As for the ensuing Sermon, of the Publication of it, shall in the least tend, to set the wheel of Prayer a going, on the behalf of the Rising Generation, I trust it will not be a grief to my self, or others, that I have granted a Copy of what was delivered, unto such as have importuned me thereunto. Some years ago, I mentioned another Discourse relating to the Rising Generation *in* New-England, *then in my thoughts. I was not yea and nay in those purposes; but have through the good hand of God upon me, finished (according to the measure of Grace received) what I designed. Nor am I altogether without hope, but that God who hath chosen the weak things of the World to do his work by, that so the excellency of the Power may appear to be of God, will own that poor endeavour for the good of souls, when his providence shall bring it forth. In the mean time, this being of the same nature with the former, let the candid Christian Reader accept of it, and help me also by his Prayers, that I may serve the Generation wherein I live, and whereof I am, according to the Will of God.*

Boston August 22. 1678. *Increase Mather.*

Pray

Pray for the Rising Generation.

ISAIAH. 44. 3.

I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine Off spring.

THe Prophet having in the conclusion of the preceding Chapter, in the Name of God, denounced heavy Judgement to come upon the Apostate Church of *Israel*, he doth proceed in this Chapter to speak by way of Consolation to the godly remnant amongst them; And for that end doth put them in mind of a most gracious and glorious promise; under which we have, 1. The persons concerned, or the Subject of this promise, *viz* The *Israel* of God, *ver.* 1. *Yet hear now O Iacob my Servant, and Israel whom I have chosen,* Who are described from their political birth. *ver.* 2 *Thus saith the Lord, that made and formed thee from the womb.* The Children of *Israel* considered as a Church and State, were born in the day when the Lord brought them out of *Egypt*; they were then formed to be a people for himself; The Lord moulded them up into a proportionable frame of Church and State; for which cause did the children of *Israel* begin their Religious Account, (albeit their civil Account began six Months before that) from the time of the year when they came out of *Egypt*, since that then they seemed to begin their life. And then they were a *Ieshurun*, *Thou Ieshurun*, *h. e.* a righteous People as to their constitution and profession, according to the signification of the name *Ieshurun*; they were wholly a right seed, under most righteous Laws. 2 We have the blessing promised in the 3*d.* verse: And it is first expressed, then explained. It is expressed in the former part of the verse, *I will pour water upon the thirsty*, (so the verse should be read) And

Gatak: in locum English Annotations Iosh: 3: 1

floods upon the dry ground: alluding partly unto plentiful showrs, whereby the thirsty Earth is made fruitful, and partly unto rivers, such as *Nilus* in *Egypt*, the floods and seasonable overflowings whereof do enrich the earth: the promise is explained in the latter part of the verse, the words that are before us to insist on. *I will pour my spirit and my blessing*, h. e. that wonderful blessing of the Spirit: They are spiritual waters which are here spoken of. No other showrs then those that come down from the third, and highest heaven: and this promise is further illustrated from the blessed extent of it, in that, not only Parents, but Children are concerned therein. On thy Seed *i. e.* thy Children, and on *thine Off-spring*, i. e. Posterity as some render the word, *Hebr. I will pour my blessing upon thy young spriggs.* The Children of Gods Servants, that spring from them, and must succeed when they are dead and gone out of the world, are intended by this expression.

Concerning the fulfilment of this promise, this (as well as many other Scriptures which are prophetical, and promissary) doth admit of a Typical and Partial, as also an Antitypical, and more plenary Accomplishment. The Lords people whilest in *Babylon* were like unto dry and desolate ground, but the Lord received them afterwards, and brought them into a flourishing estate, and there was a glorious work of the Spirit of God in that matter, *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.* And there will be a more glorious accomplishment of this Prophecy and Promise, when God shall pour out a Spirit of converting Grace upon the body of the Israelitish Nation.

Moreover, the words being a special branch of the Covenant of Grace, which God hath established with his Servants and with their Children, Gentiles are concerned therein as well as Jews; for upon them is come the blessing of *Abraham* by Jesus Christ.

See Dr. Owen of the Spirit. p. 87

And indeed the words have special reference unto New-Testament-times, which is also intimated by that expression of pouring the Spirit: God is said to give his Spirit, under the Old-Testament, but it is very observable, that he is not said to pour his Spirit on men, except in the New-Testament, or in Scriptures that do refer to the dayes of the Gospel.

The Doctrine which we may take up from the Words, is,

Doct.

Doct. *That one of the greatest blessings promised in the Covenant of Grace, is, That the Lord will pour his Spirit upon the Children and Posterity of his Servants.*

Now for the clearing of this Doctrine, four things may be enquired into? (1) What is here meant by the Spirit? (2) What is implyed in this pouring the Spirit. (3) How it doth appear that the pouring of the Spirit upon Children is a great Blessing? (4) The reason why the Lord hath made such a promise.

Q. 1. *What is here meant by the Spirit?*

Ans. The Spirit is not here taken in a personal sence; although it be a glorious Truth, that the Holy Ghost himself doth dwell in the hearts of Believers, yet he is not as to his person said to be poured on men; for so he is equally in all the Saints: whereas this expression of *Pouring* the Spirit intimates a larger communication of him to some then unto others. Wherefore the Phrase is Metonymical, that being affirmed of the cause, which is proper to the effect. In respect of his effects and operations the Holy Ghost is poured forth upon his Servants. *See* Mr *Cottons Answer to Bayly* p. 36, 37, 38. Dr. *Owen of perseverance.* chap 8.

1. Then by the Spirit here is meant, *The gifts of the Spirit.* All spiritual gifts, especially Illumination in the mysteries of the Gospel is from the Holy Ghost: Hence they that have such gifts are said to be *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*, Heb. 6 4. He that hath a gift of knowledge, or a gift of prayer, hath received it from the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of the Lord is so far poured upon him. And the gifts of the Spirit are compared unto water in the Scripture, *Joh. 7. 38, 39. He that believeth on me, out of his belly, i. e. his heart, shall flow rivers of living water; this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* For as Waters do refresh the bodies of men, so the gifts of the Holy Ghost do refresh their Souls: when the Lord did showr down his Spirit in that plentiful measure on the Apostles, thousands of Souls were refreshed and revived thereby. This then is partly meant here, when it is said, I will pour my Spirit on your Seed, *i. e.* your Children shall have gifts of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon them; they shall be taught to know the Lord from the greatest to the least.

2. By the Spirit here converting, sanctifying Grace is meant: The Spirit is put for the graces thereof: Conversion is the special work of the Holy Ghost: The conversion of the house of *David*,

vid, h. e. the Elect of God, is intimated by that of *pouring a Spirit of Grace upon them*, Zech. 12. 10. Grace is wrought in the Soul by no other hand then that of the Spirit. When God sends down his Spirit to accompany his Word and Ordinances, then converting work goeth on, but if he withhold the efficacious influences of his holy Spirit, converting work will be at a stand, all means and outward dispensations notwithstanding. Wherefore *Conversion*, or *Regeneration* is called the *Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. These words then are a promise and gracious intimation unto the Lords People, that a Spirit of Converting grace shall be poured upon their Children.

We come to the second enquiry, *viz.* What is implyed in this *Pouring* of the Spirit, which the Text speaketh of?

Ans. 1. This expression doth imply, *that the graces of the Spirit are fitly resembled unto water*; so much is intimated by the Metaphor of *pouring*, which alludeth unto the Clouds, pouring down Rain upon the Earth. Water is of a purifying nature, so the waters of the Spirit, sanctifying grace doth cleanse, and purifie the souls of men, *Ezek. 36. 25. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you.* The guilt of sin is washed away in the blood of Christ; the filth of sin is purged by those blessed waters which do proceed from the Spirit of Christ, even converting, sanctifying grace: For the same reason grace is compared unto fire, *Mat. 3. 11.* Metals, Gold and Silver, are purified by fire, other things by water, therefore are the blessed operations of the Holy Ghost compared both to the one, and to the other. Water is of a mollifying nature; the Earth that is dry and hard is thereby softened, *Psal. 65 10. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it*, thou greatly enrichest it with the River of God, which is full of water, *thou makest it soft with showers*: So doth converting grace soften the dry and hard hearts of the children of men; that heart which was as hard as a stone before, if once a Spirit of converting grace be poured thereon; it doth become soft and plyable like water. Again, Water maketh fruitful; showers and floods do so: Thus when the Lord doth rain the waters of the Spirit, or cause them to flow over the Souls of men, they are made fruitful in the works of Righteousness, *Isai 32. 15. Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be come a fruitful field.* That Soul that

that was a desolate, parched, barren Wilderness, when once the Spirit from on high is poured upon it, doth become like a fruitful field, *Ezek. 34. 26, 27.* Fruits of holiness and righteousness are the effect of being watered by the Spirit of God; only the converted man, that hath Grace in his soul, is indeed fruitful, others are barren and desolate ground. Once more, water is of an healing nature; so are the waters of the spirit, sin is the souls sickness, grace is the souls health; the wound received by original Corruption is in some measure healed by converting grace, *Ezek. 47. 9. For they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the River cometh* Those words are a prophesie, concerning the conversion of the Gentiles, by means of that healing vertue which doth attend the blessed waters of the Gospel.

2. This expression of pouring the spirit, doth intimate, *an abundant measure of the spirit*, i. e. of the gifts and graces thereof. *Pouring* is something more then *Sprinkling*, as when their cometh a plentiful rain from Heaven, enough to satisfie dry Ground, it cometh pouring down. As *Elihu* speaks, *Job 36. 27, 28. He maketh small the drops of water, they pour down Rain according to the vapour thereof, which the Clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.* So this pouring of the spirit noteth a great shower of grace, Hence it is said in the Context, that *Floods* shall be poured on the dry ground, now a *Flood of Grace* intimates a great measure thereof. There are many Scripture expressions that confirm this, *Prov. 1. 23. I will pour out my spirit upon you.* The Hebrew word נבע *Nabang* which is there translated, *Pour*, signifieth to *spring up*, intimating that the spirit of grace in the souls of Believers is like a Fountain, where is an abundance of water. *Isai. 32, 15. Until the spirit be powred out upon us from on high.* The Hebrew word ערה *Gnadah* signifieth *to make bare*; so that the meaning is, that there shall be a manifest, conspicuous pouring forth of the spirit, that all the world should take notice of it. And indeed, when a soul is converted there is an abundant effusion of the spirit, to accomplish such a strange thing as that is, to change such a cursed nature, to renew such a vile heart, must needs proceed from a plentiful effusion of the spirit. *Tit. 3. 5, 6. By the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* Wherefore when it is said, *I will pour my spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine*

Off spring: the Lord doth graciously promise his servants that their Children shall attain unto an eminency of spiritual gifts, and unto large measures of Grace and Holiness.

We come to the third Enquiry, *viz. How it doth appear that the pouring of the Spirit upon Children is a great blessing?* Ans.

1. *In that the gift of the Holy Ghost is mentioned in the Scripture as a great and wonderful thing* It is said, Act. 10. 45. *They were astonished, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Yea, it is mentioned as such a gift as is equivalent to all good things, *Mat. 7. 11: Your Father which is in Heaven shall give good things to them that ask him*: Now in *Luke* it is expressed by saying, *Your Heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Chap. 11. 13. So then the gift of the Spirit is virtually all good things: Truly if God pour his Spirit upon our Children, he doth more for them then if he bestowed all the good things in the World upon them. This is the great promise of the Gospel: As the great promise of the Old Testament was concerng the coming of the *Messias*, so the great promise of the New-Testament doth respect a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit of Grace. Hence the pouring down of the spirit is noted by that expression of the promise of the Father, *Act. 1. 4.* And he is called *the Spirit of Promise*, Eph 1. 13. as being the great gift which God hath promised to bestow on his servants.

2. *The Truth is evident in that the Blessing here spoken of, is an everlasting Blessing.* Eternal good things are the chief: so is this Blessing of the spirit, upon whom he is poured, upon them, and in them he remaineth for evermore: The Hebrew word פצק *Jatzak* which is here translated *Pour*, signifieth to *Fasten* as well as to *Pour*: *I will fasten my spirit upon your Children.* That indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in Believers, which the New-Testament speaketh so much of, is everlasting: He abideth with them and in them for ever, *John 14. 16.* And the graces of the spirit, which he doth pour on his People are everlasting: common gifts may cease, but special grace abideth to eternity. It is a seed of God that is incorruptible, which liveth and abideth for ever, *1 Pet. 1. 23.* As the Holy Fire (which signified the Holy Ghost, his coming down from Heaven into the hearts of his People) it never went out; no more shall grace dye, or be totally extinguished in a Believing soul: Hence, true Grace is compared

pared unto living (*i. e.* ſpring) water, which never runs dry; yea unto great Rivers in reſpect of their perennity: great Rivers are alwayes running from the beginning of the World to the end thereof; ſo is true laving-grace of an everlaſting nature, *Iſai. 41. 18.*

3. *A ſpirit of Converting Grace is ſuch a Bleſſing as never goeth alone*: that ſetteth forth the greatneſs, and eminency of it: If (ſaith the Apoſtle) God give us his Son, ſhall he not with Him give us all things, *Rom 8. 32* So if the Lord give his holy ſpirit to us, and to our Children, ſhall he not with him give all things: Godlineſs hath the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come, *1 Tim 4. 8* We ſhould not trouble our ſelves about laying up great portions or much of the things of this World for our Children; if we can but prevail with God to pour his ſpirit on them, to give grace to them, they are ſure never to want as long as they live in this World: Is not pardon of ſin a rich and glorious bleſſing, which our poor Children, becauſe they are *our* Off-ſpring ſtand in need of? Now if the Lord pour a ſpirit of converting grace on them, their ſins ſhall be forgiven, *Mar. 4. 12*: Is not eternal life and glory a great Bleſſing? the pouring of the ſpirit on the ſoul is a certain ſign and evidence of one that is deſigned unto eternal life in Heaven: Therefore the *Scripture* ſpeaketh of *the firſt fruit of the ſpirit*, Rom 8. 23 And of *the earneſt of the ſpirit*, Eph 1. 14 If the Lord give grace to our Children, he will give glory too, yea he will withhold from them no good thing, *Pſalm 84. 11.*

Q 4 *But why hath the Lord promiſed to do thus for the Children of his ſervants?*

Reaſ: 1 *From the exceeding riches of the grace of* God: That the Lord moſt High, who hath an abſolute dominion over the works of his hands, ſhould at all deal with man in a Covenant way, or make any promiſe to him, is from grace; much more that he ſhould deal thus with fallen man: And that he ſhould extend his Covenant, not only to Parents, but to their Children alſo, that their Off-ſpring with them are under the wings of the Covenant; and moreover, that he ſhould promiſe ſo great a bleſſing as that of giving his ſpirit, and yet more, that his Spirit ſhould be *poured* upon them. We may well cry out, as they did, *Zech. 4. 7. Grace! grace!* None but a God of infinite grace would have done thus.

Reaſ. 2. *Becauſe the Children of Gods people do many of them*

belong to Election, As it is expressed in the Context, *Jeshurun whom I have chosen*; That Election of God is mentioned as the ground of this promise in the Text. The Elect of God are the proper Subjects of this promise: The Lord in the Covenant of Grace hath not only promised that whoever doth truly believe and repent shall be saved, but as to the Elect, there is a promise of the first Grace, even that converting grace shall be poured on them, they shall be made to repent and believe. A new heart shall be given to the house of *Israel*, h. e. the Elect, typified by the house of *Israel*, Gal. 6. 16. Now God hath seen good to cast the line of Election so, as that it doth (though not wholly, and only, yet) for the most part, run through the loins of godly Parents. There are, it is true, Elect Children, who are not born of Elect Parents, but there are few (if any) Elect Parents without Elect Children. Sometimes all the Children belong to Election, as we see in the many Sons of *Jacob*, However some of them, that the Lord remembers, and establisheth his Covenant with. The Scripture doth frequently hint this Truth, that Elect Children are for the most part cast upon Elect Parents, *see Psal* 103. 17. *Isai. 59. 20. & 65. 22, 23. 2 Tim. 1. 5, 2 John 1.* And observation doth confirm it; For we see that the Elect of God are not in all Nations alike, but in some the Lord gathers his Elect to himself from Generation to Generation. And there are some Families that the Lord hath chosen above others, and therefore poureth his spirit upon the off-spring in such Families successively. But of this I have spoken more largely elsewhere, and therefore shall not insist further upon it now.

In my Sermons on 1 Chron 28. 9 where Objections against this Position are answered

Real. 3. *That so godly Parents might be encouraged to Pray and believe for their Children.* It is marvellous pleasing unto God when his servants pray and believe not only for themselves, but for their Children also. Now a promise is an encouragement unto Prayer. *David* found in his heart to pray that God would bless his family for ever; because the Lord had promised that it should be so, *2 Sam 7 3, ult.* Men should not think with themselves (as some do) if their Children do belong to God, then he will convert them, whether they pray for it or no, but should therefore be stirred up to the more fervency in cries to Heaven, for the blessing promised. I (saith the Lord) *will give a new heart to you, and to your Children*, yet you must pray for it. *I will yet for this be enquired*

quired of by the House of Israel to do it for them, Ezek. 36. 26, 37. And a promise is an encouragement to Faith, as well as unto Prayer. As *Paul* said, *I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me*, Act 27. 25. So a Believer may say, God hath told me that he will bless me, and my family, that he will pour his Spirit upon my poor Children, and therefore I believe God, that it shall be as he hath told me.

Use Let it be for *Exhortation* and *Encouragement* unto that which is the special ground of our being thus before the Lord this day, *viz. To Pray that a Spirit of converting Grace may be poured down from Heaven upon our Children, and the Rising Generation in New-England.*

I would direct this *Exhortation*, 1. To Parents, 2. To Children.

1. To Parents. Consider,

1. *How needful a thing it is to be much in Prayer on this account.* Converting grace is of absolute necessity in order to Salvation, and that as to the Children of godly Parents as well as others: For they *are born in sin*, as *David* confesseth, Psal. 51. 5 *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*; Yet his Mother was a precious, godly Woman; and for ought that doth appear to the contrary, his Father was a good man too: wherefore such Children dying in a natural, unconverted state, are liable unto Wrath, and Death, and Curse, and Hell, *Eph. 2. 3. We also*, even we that are Jews, and not the Gentiles only; we that are the Elect of God: yea, we that are chosen to be Apostles and Ministers of Christ, *were by nature the Children of Wrath even as others.* So that except the Lord send forth his Spirit, and Renew the Souls, change the Natures of our poor Children, they are never like to see Heaven. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdome of God*, Joh 3. 3. You that are Parents, are you willing that the Children of your own bowels should be miserable throughout the dayes of Eternity? That they should ly burning in a fiery Ocean as long as God shall be God? Yet so it must be, except the Lord in mercy look upon them, so as to *pour down of his Spirit* from on High upon them. Moreover *Prayer* is needful upon this account, in that Conversions are become rare in this age of the World.

They that have their thoughts exercised in discerning things of this nature, have sad apprehension with reference unto this matter: That the work of Conversion hath been at a great stand in the world: In the last age, in the days of our Fathers, in other parts of the world, scarce a Sermon preached but some evidently converted; yea, sometimes hundreds in a Sermon: which of us can say we have seen the like? Clear sound conversions are not frequent in some Congregations. The body of the Rising Generation is a poor perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down his Spirit) an undone Generation. Many that are profane, Drunkards, Swearers, Lascivious, Scoffers at the power of Godliness, Despisers of those that are good, Proud, Disobedient creatures, God from Heaven pity them! Others that are only civil, and outwardly conformed to good order, by reason of their Education, but never knew what the new birth means; pray for them that they may not only come near, but enter into the Kingdome of God.

n fulfilling of Scriptures P. 416

Consider 2. *That Prayer is a notable means to obtain this mercy*; Prayer opens the Windows of Heaven: *Elias* prayed that it might rain, and Heaven gave showrs; Prayer brings down the showers of blessing in a proper literal sence: but especially these spiritual showrs, which the Text speaketh of, wherein the Lord promiseth to showr down his spirit upon our poor Children. Assuredly, if there be Prayers, and Tears before the Lord on this account, they will come pouring down again in showrs of grace at last. I have read of an eminent Minister of Christ, that having prayed fervently with some Christian Friends, they in the next room felt strange Elapses of the spirit upon the heart, so as that one said, O what a man is this, that can knock down the spirit of God into all our hearts? who knoweth but that we may pray down the spirit of God into the souls of our Children, *Luke* 11. 9. *Knock and it shall be opened to you, ask, and it shall be given you.* What shall then be given? even the holy spirit to them that ask him, *verse* 13. O then let us knock hard at Heaven gates this day: certainly such requests, are welcome to heaven, yea to God in Heaven: he hath shewed how acceptable such requests are to him by gracious Answers: Christ said unto his Disciples, *Behold I send the promise of the Father*, meaning the spirit of promise, *unto you, but tarry ye in the City Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high,*

Luk.

Luk. 24. 49. And what were they to do at *Jerusalem* in the mean time? No question but (as some have noted) they were much in Fasting and Prayer that this promise of the Father might come upon them. And not long after there was a most gracious and glorious effusion of the Spirit. And of later times, God hath been entreated to send down his Spirit abundantly for the conversion of souls. Not fifty years ago, in a place in *Scotland*, a great number of praying Christians met together, when a Sermon was to be Preached the next day, and they spent the night afore in Prayer, that the Lord would own the word then to be spoken, for the Conversion of souls, and Behold! the Lord went forth with his word, so as that near upon five hundred Souls were wrought upon, and converted by that one Sermon. I have been told of a Church in *New-England*, that set apart a day for this end, that they might by Fasting and Prayer beg converting Grace for their Children, and that since, the Gospel hath been made successful in that Congregation, so as that a day of publick Thanksgiving hath been attended, in that so many of the younger, Rising Generation have been brought home to Christ. Now if the Lord awaken a Spirit of Prayer concerning this thing in these Churches generally, there will doubtless be some blessed effect of it, with respect to the Rising Generation. And whereas God hath put it into our hearts to set apart this day, thus to seek unto him, I am perswaded it shall not be in vain, but that there are a number of souls belonging to this Congregation, that must have the Spirit of the Lord powred on them: Sheep that are not yet brought into the Lords Fold, that must hear the voice of the Son of God and live: Since the time that we agreed thus to set apart this day, God hath sent down plentiful showrs, whereby the dry and thirsty *Ground* is wonderfully Refreshed: And is not that a token for good, that those blessed showers which we are Fasting and Praying for this day, shall in due time come down upon the Souls of our poor Children?

Idem, eodem libro p. 417.

At Milford

Consider 3. *What encouragement we have to be at this work.* The success which such Prayers have had (of which something hath been mentioned, and much more might be spoken) should encourage us. As for some of us, our Fathers and Mothers now in glory, did pray for us when they were in the World, and God heard them, did they that we are sprung from, pray for us? and hath

hath God heard them? and will he not hear us if we go and pray in like manner for our Off-spring? And have we not already seen some Answers? If we look into our Families, do we not discern that as to some of our Children, the fear of God is put into their hearts? And why should we not look upon that as a first fruits, that all the rest of our Children shall be converted in due time? Moreover, the consideration of the Covenant, and Promises of God respecting Children, are a great encouragement to pray for them. This is his everlasting Covenant, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee*, Gen. 17. 7. This promise is expressed indefinitely, and therefore doth encourage godly Parents to plead with the Lord for mercy and grace for all their Children: As an Holy man once said, and it was a great word of Faith in him, *If I had twenty Children I would not hate God one of them.* He hath promised to be a God to my children indefinitely, and therefore I'le pray for them all, and believe for them all, and why should it not be so, since the Lord himself hath said, ALL *thy Children shall be taught of God*, Isai. 54. 13. And the Scripture doth abound with particular promises, respecting the Conversion and Salvation of the Children of godly Parents: When thou dost that which is good, and right in the sight of God, *it shall go well with thy Children after thee for ever*, Deut. 12. 28 There is special mercy belonging to those that are the Seed of the blessed of the Lord, and to their Off-spring with them, *Isai. 65. 23.* yea promises of converting Grace to be poured upon them, *Zech. 10. 9. They shall live with their Children, and turn again.* The Children of the Lords People shall be turned from the power of Satan unto God; that's implied in those words, and not only that the Jews and their Children should be returned from their Captivity in Babylon, whereby this turning again from sin unto God, *i. e.* that Conversion which we are speaking of was mysteriously signified as in a Type. And in the Book of *Psalms*, we find gracious promises to the Children of such as fear God, *Psal. 102. 28. The Children of thy Servants shall continue, and their Seed shall be established before thee.* And again *Psal. 128 3. Thy Children shall be like Olive-plants round about thy Table.* The Expression may import that they shall be comforts and ornaments to their Parents, yea, that they shall be adorned with gifts and graces of the Spirit of God. And in special, there is a promise of this blessing with respect

See Dr Winter of Infant Baptism p. 105, 107

vid Mr Stockton of family instruction. p 128.

respect to Children in the times of the Gospel: *Joel 2. 28. It shall come to pass afterwards*, h. e. *in the last dayes, or times of the Gospel*, as the Apostle doth expound the words, *I will pour my Spirit upon your Children*. Now these days wherein we live, come under the last days, we therefore should plead that promise before the Lord, and say, These are the last days, Lord, and thou hast said, that in the last dayes thou wilt pour thy Spirit upon the Children of thy Servants. And indeed that fulfilling of the promise which our eys have seen is ground of encouragement to pray and plead, and believe for more. Some of *New-England* Children have been eminently blessed by the Lord; he hath poured his spirit upon them richly, *Plants of Renown* have sprung up here, that have been the glory of the Land where they have had their Education: yea, some, that whole Nations have fared the better for them: Rivers of Water have flowed out of their Souls, whereby thousands have been refreshed. And there is a blessed sprinkling in most Churches; though not that general pouring down of the Spirit that is to be desired, yet a sprinkling which we should take notice of, for the encouragement of Faith and Prayer. I shall only mention that which I have most reason to know; in this poor Congregation, within these few late years, there have been of Children born in *New-England*, near upon fourscore persons, that have come before the Church, and declared what God hath done for their souls, and in that way subscribed their names to the God of *Israel*; besides many that have come out of other Lands, and when they have been here, the Lord hath poured his Spirit upon them. I speak it that God may have the glory of his grace, and that Ministers may be encouraged to Preach, and the Lords People to pray for the conversion of souls. Moreover, the consideration of what Parents the children of this Land are (many of them) sprung from, doth afford matter of encouragement. *Paul* was induced the rather to hope well concerning *Timothy*, because he was descended of such a stock; he had a gracious Mother, and a gracious Grandmother also, *2 Tim. 1. 5.* So many Children with us are the Off-spring of such Parents, (*Fathers* and *Grand-fathers*) as have been eminent for God in their time, eminent for holiness, yea and for sufferings, on the account of bearing witness to the Name and Truth of Christ. Now a special blessing is wont to follow the Children of such as have been sufferers for Christ.

Our Fathers were some of them eminent *Confessors*, and in a Degree, *Martyrs of Jesus*, who left a pleasant Land, and Fathers houses to follow the Lord into a wilderness, into a Land which was not sown. Yea and they came hither partly with respect unto their Off-spring, that they might leave their Children under the special blessing of God in Christ Jesus. Hath not the Lord peculiar blessings in store for such Children? let us pray them down from Heaven above.

Consider 4. *What a blessed thing it will be, if we prevail in Heaven for this mercy.* We cannot pray for a more desirable thing then this blessing! It will help all that is amiss among us. If the Lord pour his Spirit on the body of the present rising Generation, so as to begin a work of Conversion in those that are as yet strangers to the power of godliness, and to carry on that work by renewed Conversions in the hearts of his People, that will save us from those Judgements which otherwise there is no hope that we shall escape them. *Ezek. 39. 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them*: Why? *For I have poured out my Spirit*, saith the Lord God. And do we not desire the Eternal as well as Temporal prosperity of our poor Children? If the Lord pour his Spirit on them, it shall go well with them, and that for ever *Deut. 5. 29.* you are thoughtful what will become of your Children after you are gone out of the World. If you can but pray Grace into their Souls, they shall do well enough. As that Godly, Learned *Clavigir* would sometimes express, If (saith he) I may see the fear of God in my Children, *Sati mihi, satis filiis & filiabus prospexi*, I have then portion enough for my Sons, and for my Daughters: They are then sure never to want any good thing as long as they shall live. If the Lord pour his Spirit upon our Children, then shall we have joy in them indeed. No greater joy then that, *3 John 3, 4. Prov. 23. 24, 25. The Father of the Righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begets a wise (i.e. godly) Child shall have joy of him; thy Father and thy Mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.* We shall bless God to Eternity that ever we had such Children: For it will adde to the Glory of Parents at the great Day, when they shall behold not themselves alone, but their Off-spring with them partakers of Eternal life and happiness, and withal see and know that their prayers have had an influence towards the obtaining of all that mercy.

Read Mr. Samuel Hooker Sermon on Hos. 10. 12

lege Clavigeri vitam

We

We shall meet those Prayers again with exceeding joy *in that day.* And in the mean time, our Children, if we can pray down the Spirit of the Lord upon them, will continue to pray for us, whilst we are with them in the World. O what a blessed thing is that, for a man to have the Children that came out of his own bowels, praying for him continually? A worthy Minister of Christ once said, *I had rather have my house filled with my Childrens Prayers, then to have my house filled with Gold.*

A few things by way of Direction.

1. *Let Parents be sure that they be converted themselves,* Deut. 30. 6. *I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy Seed.* If our own hearts be circumcised, we may pray in Faith that the Lord will circumcise the hearts of our Children, otherwise we cannot do it. Parents that have not grace themselves are not fit to pray for Grace to be poured on their Children; nor indeed can they do it: for the spirit of supplication is the Spirit of grace, *Zech.* 12 10. Nor can they believe for them. An Hypocrite, or unconverted man cannot act Faith for his Childs soul, who never yet did believe for his own Soul. Nor doth this promise in the Text belong to other Parents, *Psal* 128. 4. *Behold that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.*

2. *Parents, be exemplary.* Walk before God in your Houses with a perfect heart. Let us be careful in our Families, to walk so that our Children may see by our examples how they ought to walk and to please God, that if they will but be and do like unto their Parents, they shall certainly be blessed for ever. There are many of the Elect of God, that the special means of their conversion hath been the holy example of their Parents. Many a chosen Vessel, that when he hath beheld his Fathers love to Christ, and faithfulness to the interest of God, Zeal, Patience, Holiness, that hath been a special means of Conviction and Conversion. You know what *Elijah* said to *Elisha*, when he desired that he might have (*h. e.* comparatively to what the rest of the Sons of the Prophets had) a double portion of *Elijahs* Spirit, He said, *Thou hast asked an hard thing, nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be so,* 2 Kin. 2. 10. Even so if your Children see you holy and faithful to the interest of God, and of Jesus Christ, and every way exemplary doubt not of it, but in Gods time, they shall receive of your spirit.

Se my Brother sermons 01 1 Kin 8. 57. p. 22

As on the other hand there is nothing more fatally destructive and ruining to the Souls of Children then a bad example in Parents, especially if they be such as pretend to Religion: when *Cham* did but one time see his Father in drink, it brought a fearful curse upon him, and upon his Posterity to this day. There are great complaints (and too great cause) concerning *the Rising Generation in New-England*; whereas the fault is very much in Parents, in that they are no more exemplary: Your Children take notice of your Pride, your Sensuality, your Worldliness, your unmortified passions, and that doth wofully scandalize, and harden them against the blessed ways of Christ. Obe careful to walk so as that your Children may not see their Fathers nakedness.

3. *Let Parents be careful to instruct their Children in the fear of God*: Prayer should be followed with suitable endeavors. If Parents must pray that their Children may have Grace, they must use the means whereby God is wont to convey Grace into the Souls of his Elect. *Psal.* 34 11. *Come ye Children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* David did so, and *Solomon* his Son found that those Paternal Instructions were blessed for saving good to his Soul, *Prov* 4. 1. 3,4. Also the Instructions of his Mother were (through the blessing of God) a means of much good unto him, *Prov.* 31. 1,2. Fathers and Mothers should be instilling good Principles into the minds and hearts of their Children betimes. *Ephes.* 6. 4. *Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,* ἐκτροφὴ Feed their Souls with spiritual Milk as soon as they are capable of it. Tell them sadly, whilest yet they are Children of their misery by nature, of the necessity of a new birth, Instruct them about Christ, and Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity; charge them with the greatest solemnity to know and serve the God of their Fathers, *1 Thess.* 2. 11. *We charged every one of you, as a Father his Children.* It becometh a Father to charge his Children: And if Parents be faithful in discharging their duty this way, success will not be altogether wanting: If you *will* command your Children they *shall* keep the way of the Lord, *Gen.* 18. 19. If Parents would spend more time, and take more pains in instructing their Children, and following those Instructions, with fervent Prayers to God, he would own them therein, and we should see more young Converts, and a world of Sin and Sorrow would such children be prevented and saved from.

4. *Wait on the Lord*; Though the answer do not come presently, yet continue praying and believing, and let nothing discourage you: say not, I have prayed for my Childrens Souls, but no grace, no change wrought in them, and now I am e'ne hopeless and faithless. Remember the woman of *Canaan*; she cried to the Lord Jesus for her poor childe, and yet had repulses one after another, the Lord not seeming to regard her; this was to try her Faith: at last she had her desire granted; who knoweth but the Lord may deal so with thee? you therefore that fear God despair not concerning your Children, though at present they may be stout-hearted, and far from Righteousness. *Austin* was a long time a vain, lascivious, prophane young man, but his godly Mothers Prayers and Tears did at last prevail in Heaven, that he became an eminent Convert. O continue to pray hard, and believe strongly, and that Son who at present is the grief of thy mind, and maketh thy Soul to be in bitterness, God can make an *Austin* of him. And that Daughter, which (as *Jephtah* said) *hath brought thee very low, and is one of them that trouble thee*, the Lord can convert her Soul, that thy Heart and thy Reins, even thine shall rejoyce. I Remember I have somewhere read of one that had been a very sinful creature, and desperately froward and rebellious but her godly Parents continued praying, and entreated divers faithful Ministers of God to pray for her, and God heard them, and in answer to Prayer, rescued a forlorn Soul out of the Jaws of Satan and Hell: & when that young Woman lay upon her Deathbed, she said to her godly Friends and Relations, *For my sake never despair of any one, let their case at present be never so bad and desperate, for you know how it was with me, and yet see how God hath answered your Prayers for me.* Think of it you Fathers and Mothers that have wept and prayed for the *Conversion* and *Salvation* of your children full many a time, and as yet you see it not, Though you should never see it, dye trusting in God, and believing that he will remember his Covenant with your Children after you, *Gen. 50. 24.* It was an excellent Spirit of Faith that breathed in that dying Worthy of his time, who upon his death-bed could say to his Children and Grand-children, *I know that you shall be blessed not only with the blessings of earth, but with the blessings of Heaven.* Know for your encouragement, that your Prayers will live after you are dead; Prayers dipt in the blood of Christ, are of eternal

Lege Austini confessiones.

See Clerke's Examp. vol. 2. p. 360

Philip Mornay

Efficacy. When your Bodies are in the Grave, and your Souls in Heaven, your Children may remember how you instructed them, and prayed for them, and the remembrance of it may then be a means of their conversion: You may hear of your Childrens conversion after you are in Heaven; the Angels of God that see it, and that rejoyce over a sinner that repenteth will bring you the tidings of it; and then there will be joy all Heaven over.

2. Let me exhort Children that are here before the Lord this day: *O do you go home, and pray earnestly for converting Grace.* Beg as for your lives that the God of your Fathers would pour his Spirit upon you: Young ones hearken! In the Name of the Lord I speak to you; the Lord can pour his Spirit on you betimes, then shall you be rich in Grace, let this promise encourage you to look up to God through Jesus Christ. Go into secret corners, and plead it with God; say, Lord thou hast promised to pour thy Spirit upon the Off-spring of thy Servants; I am (through thy grace) among the Children of thy Servants; thou art the God of my Father, the God of my Grand-father, oh! be my God also. If you seek God in earnest, he will be found of you, but if you forsake him, and break his Covenant sealed in your Baptisme, wo unto you. If you dy and be not first new Creatures, better you had never been born: you will be left without excuse before the Lord, terrible witnesses shall rise up against you at the last day. Your godly Parents will testifie against you before the Son of God at that day: And the Ministers of Christ will also be called in as witnesses against you for your condemnation, if you dy in your sins. As for many of you, I have treated with you privately and personally, I have told you, and I do tell you, and make solemn Protestation before the Lord, that if you dy in a Christless, graceless estate, I will most certainly profess unto Jesus-Christ at the day of Judgement, Lord, these are the Children, whom I spake often unto in thy Name, publickly and privately, and I told them, that if they did not make to themselves a new heart, and make sure of an interest in Christ, they should become damned creatures for evermore; and yet they would not repent and believe the Gospel. O why should I that can appeal to God, that I long for your Conversion, be your accuser before the Lord Jesus at the last day?

And you that are grown up to years of more discretion, and understanding,

derstanding: Young Men, and young Women, O be in earnest for Converting Grace, before it be too late. It is high time for you to look about you, deceive not your selves with false Conversions (as many young men do to their eternal ruine) or with gifts instead of Grace; beware of out-standing your day of Grace, lest the Spirit of God depart, and your Souls become desolate. Death waits for you. There is now a Mortal and Contagious Disease in many Houses; the Sword of the Lord is drawn, and young men fall down apace slain under it; do you not see the Arrows of Death come flying over your heads? Why then, Awake, Awake, and turn to God in Jesus Christ whilst it is called to day, and know for certain that if you dy in your sins, you will be the most miserable of any poor Creatures in the bottom of Hell. Oh consider of it, to be prayed, wept, Preached, Fasted down to Hell, what an amazing thing will it be! wherefore now hear, and turn, and live; As yet Christ stands and knocks at the door of your hearts. He doth so this day, and by this Sermon. O that you would hear the Lord Jesus calling to you from Heaven, and saying, *Turn ye at my Reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you.*

Tibi Domino.